

SALEM, OREGON
OREGON STATESMAN

MORNING 23,758
SUNDAY 24,151

APR 27 1961

Durable Official

There is one official in Washington who has survived the change in administrations. In fact he has survived many such changes. He is as durable as the venerable colored doorkeeper who seems part of the scene in offices at the nation's capital. He holds a high rank too, but always is anonymous.

This official is the "high administration source" who briefs reporters, secure in his own anonymity. He is not identified, at least until some time elapses. Reporters protect him in order to protect themselves on future news breaks. We had thought that President Kennedy would get rid of Mr. Anonymous: but instead this chap has been busier than ever, coincident with the Cuban crisis.

This "top official" has been briefing and debriefing reporters on the Castro Complex. But it looks as though there are two such "high officials," at least; or if only one, he is proficient in talking out of two sides of his mouth. One day comes the report, without direct attribution, that Secretary of State Rusk opposed U. S. sharing in the Cuban invasion. Then comes another that says all, repeat all, the Kennedy advisers agreed on the program.

The real hassle now is over the role of CIA in the Cuban incident. One unidentified top hand blames Central Intelligence for showing Colossal Ignorance on Cuba and Castro. Tuesday a "high administration official" refutes this and insists that CIA gave the correct dope on Castro's military strength and popular support. We have a suspicion that the conflict stems from which department the "high official" is identified with: the Pentagon or the civil establishment. The former wants to shed any responsibility for the misjudging.

When we add to these the variegated explanations of Washington reporters and the theorizing of columnists, the total amounts to confusion of the public. President Kennedy promises that "all the facts" will come out in due time—the due date probably being when they will do the least hurt.

Moral: Treat with some reservation the news reports credited to "top officials" who remain anonymous.